Pass It On!®

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

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Singing Now, Singing Always

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Being Apart, Singing Together

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Being Apart, Singing Together

by Sally Rogers[1]

We have recently passed the first anniversary of the pandemic shutdown. I marked it as March 13 on my calendar, when I had to cancel an annual retreat with dear friends. At the time, we really thought we'd be back on track in a few weeks, a few months at the outside. But then the days started to accumulate.

I think we all reacted to our sudden quarantine in different ways. Some hoarded toilet tissue. Some wept over grandchildren un-hugged and friends un-seen. Within a very short time, most of us discovered the many ways to meet online through Zoom, Facebook, FaceTime, Google Meet and more. Never the same but the best we could do in a bad situation.

I have to admit that, now that I'm vaccinated and feeling like a bird let out of a cage, my time in isolation was a time of reflection—an opportunity rather than an affliction. I am an entitled white person who lives in a beautiful spot in the woods, with plenty of room to go for walks. My husband was still able to bring home a paycheck, so we weren't starving, and I have so many avocations that I was never left with empty hours with nothing to do. Music played a large role in my time at home. I believe I actually have sung for more people during the pandemic than I would have had I been on the road this year.

Shortly after we started quarantine, several brave music organizations decided to see if online concerts would be acceptable or even possible. I was fortunate to be involved with the virtual Old Songs Festival, which went off without a hitch. It was held mostly through Ron Olesko's streamed radio site, Folk Music Notebook. It was completely worth doing and showed me that music presented in this way could be beloved by listeners who were hungry for community, even virtually. CMN also chose to do an absolutely amazing online conference that lasted a week. It was so successful at drawing in new people that aspects of the presentation will be used in future conferences.

When thinking to myself: *What can I do to keep myself sane and to also give back?* I decided to start singing for fans on my Facebook page, beginning on March 30, 2020. I called my program "A Song a Day Keeps the Virus Away" (SADKVA), thinking I'd be singing a song each Monday through Friday at 4:00 p.m. for a couple of weeks, and then life would be back to normal. Day 250 was yesterday, April 5, when I decided to take a break.

My purpose personally was to expose folks to songs they might not have heard before and could learn to sing on their own. I wanted it to be about the song and not the singer. I did sing my own songs, other songs in my repertoire, but then I mined the incredible resources created by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson, *Rise Up Singing* and *Rise Again*, as well as my own enormous library of songbooks. It became an opportunity for me to learn new songs myself.

The SADKVA recordings were all saved to my YouTube channel and to my website, so are all accessible. I also put a tip jar on my website as a way to make up a portion of the income that I lost due to the pandemic. (As is true for most musicians, overnight I lost every gig I had on the books for at least a full year.)

Week followed week, and I realized that singing these songs became a bit of a lifeline for many fans. They left amazing comments of thanks as well as of memories that came up as a result of the songs. It was heartening to see the power of song to soothe, support, and distract people's attention from the isolation they were experiencing. We created a small community at 4:00 p.m. every day.

The same listeners came back day after day, some for the live performance and some afterwards. There were listeners from Brazil, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy, and I'm not sure where else. None of this would have been thought possible before the pandemic. One friend in Israel, listening to Day 108 of SADKVA, wrote this after hearing the song "Babes in the Mill":

"What a coincidence! I just learned it two weeks ago and sang it on the Webster Sat. Jam last week. I added it to my collection of 'mill songs.'"

And others are moved to share stories, some long, some short, like:

"This song was the one I sang to my daughter to put her to sleep. Now I sing it to her daughters."

Sally singing "Babes in the Mill"

While my reasons for singing were somewhat selfish (a way to make up some of my lost income, a chance to sing in public, a relatively easy way to stay in touch with fans), I have to say that the experience has humbled me. I have discovered new friends and found old ones. The songs have made a community that supports its members. One listener has recently come down with an aggressive form of cancer. Through the chat function on Facebook, others found out about it, and though they didn't know the man, they sent their thoughts and prayers his way, which helped him deal with his fear and isolation at this terrible time.

Another listener found I was connected to Jim Sigler, who produced my first album. Through SADKVA, one of Jim's good friends found me to tell me that Jim was on a respirator in a hospital in Missouri, suffering from COVID-19. We were able to follow his progress as he very slowly improved and finally was brought out of a lengthy coma and was transferred to a care facility. A group of about a dozen of his friends were able to Zoom to him in his room and sing for him. He was still unable to talk at the time, but clearly his eyes brightened knowing we were there. He continues to improve.

Just yesterday I was a guest singer for Nick Page's Mystic Chorale rehearsal. He leads nearly two hundred people in choral singing online (albeit muted). Participants also have brief opportunities to share their thoughts in the chat before and after rehearsal. I expected to simply sing and leave. Nick asked if one of the singers could sing "Circle of the Sun" with me, trading off verses. I didn't recognize her name but said "of course!" When the time came, she shared a story about our chance meeting a couple years ago. I had been reading in the waiting room of Brigham and Young Hospital, when a woman came up to me and started to sing (to the tune of "Circle of the Sun"):

> Our husbands have surgery in the Circle of the Sun,
> Circle of the Sun on their surgery day.

My jaw dropped, tears came to my eyes, and we sat down to have deep conversation as if we'd known each other for years. Then each of us in turn was called away to be with our husbands. I hadn't seen her since and nearly forgot the story. But last night, I felt like I'd rediscovered an old friend. All through music. During a pandemic. And both of our husbands are as good as cured!

Sally sings "Circle of the Sun" with Howie Bursen and Claudia Schmidt.

For me, singing songs is like walking or talking. I just do it. Always have. So this year has slowed me down enough to really take in the power that these songs have in people's lives. I am fortunate to be able to make my living as a singer. But that is not the point of the songs. The songs themselves have a job to do. Our job is to get them out there so they can do their work.

We are human and we all can sing. It is a very, very rare person who cannot sing. Usually if someone claims not to sing, it is because someone lied to them when they were young, telling them to shut their mouth and play the drum! I think one of my biggest jobs is to give people back their lost voices and to encourage those who sing to do it more and with each other. The proof of this need is that, even during a pandemic when we are doomed to be apart from one another, we seem to still be able to find ways to be in community, singing together, even if muted on Zoom.

We have managed (for the most part) to hold our worlds together until we can hug again and sing in harmony in one space. I am grateful for the slowed-down time this isolation has brought to my life. I am not anxious to get back to full speed again. But as things begin to rev up and we get vaccinated, I hope I will remember always how much we need each other and how much we need to sing. Together.

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1. https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/sally-rogers
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elRaIBRfqp4
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CG2HNiToVBY

Archive Alive

by Carl Foote[1]

What happens to my music if I am no longer here to sing it?

It's a question for children's musicians of all ages. We might sing to educate, to promote social justice, or simply to give people a moment of joy, but underneath is the hope that people will take our music—the best part of us—with them afterwards. We wish for our music to be cared for and sung often, to continue into the future as a part of the lives of others. And if we are lucky, our music will find some combination of viral popularity, commercial backing, social relevance, and organizational support that allows it to be cared for and sung long after we are no longer around to do so ourselves.

An archive is one source of long-term support to consider for your music. At first glance, donating your work to an archive is not an attractive option for a musician. How can music live when it is in a box in the basement of a library somewhere? How would anyone even know that it is there? These are good questions, and with the advent of the Internet, the answers are more attractive than they have been in the past. No longer must an archive sleep in a guarded tower, waiting for a magical heroine to kiss it back to life. By digitizing and publishing its holdings online, it is possible today for an archive to keep material safely stored in a box and simultaneously make it accessible to the entire world.

> **"It is possible today for an archive to keep material safely stored in a box and simultaneously make it accessible to the entire world."**

As with so much about the Internet, it's an ongoing process to figure out the implications of online archives and how to make them work for each of us.

Archiving is Political

> The past is never dead. It's not even past.
> — William Faulkner

Archives are the collective memories that we use to tell stories about ourselves. Their value unfolds in the present, as the story is being told. Archives have always been about today and have always been political in nature.

Every archive exists because someone has reason and money to preserve its contents. Archives are valuable to centers of cultural power, as their contents—and the resources spent to conserve them—convey the authority and legitimacy of the institution that sponsors them. People who possess archives have the power to tell their story. The Vatican Archives have been at the core of the Catholic church for centuries. Prestigious universities are proud of the academic significance of their archives. Our own government uses its Smithsonian Archives to convince us of its validity by building museums that reflect images of our country back onto us.

Mirroring our culture, archives today are challenged by questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Who gets to say what is worth saving? Who will pay for the archive to hold the material in their collections? How will memories that are not in physical or electronic form, particularly those from oral traditions, be preserved?

> **"Archiving is a very activist thing to do."**

Archives are also being changed by the new ability to digitize and publish holdings on the Internet. Online, an archive's holdings become broadly accessible, allowing them to live and participate directly in contemporary culture. This changes the relationships between the archive, its sponsors, and the rest of us. Instead of institutional experts interpreting history for the community, the community can see the originals and collaborate to tell its own story. This benefits the archives, helping them gain relevance and support from a broader community. And it benefits those who contribute to an archive, as donors receive social recognition and institutional stability beyond what they can achieve on their own.

And so, archiving is a very activist thing to do.

One activist organization with an archival focus is the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network[2] (LGBTQ-RAN). Founded at a time when very few archives would accept material that was both Queer and religious in nature, LGBTQ-RAN's primary mission is to encourage the archival preservation of LGBTQ religious history. But by publishing its efforts online, LGBTQ-RAN can go further and give visibility to a social movement that exists in the cracks between better-established histories. Visitors to the website can find biographical sketches, oral histories, online exhibits, teaching resources, and a catalog of archival collections from or about LGBTQ+ religious organizations and activists—most of which are held in public archives and are open to everyone.

Staying Visible

In certain respects, the Internet can feel more permanent than it is. Streaming services may come and go, but your favorite movies and music are always there (or about to return). Casual comments made online may be forgotten at the end of the day, yet when people in the public eye are chastised for comments made years ago, social media appears to have always been there, remembering everything. This sense of permanence is an illusion. Online content is very fragile, always in danger of disappearing at a moment's notice. Social media, streaming services, the press—these are economically driven companies that at any moment may decide it is no longer in their interest to keep you online.

A website is the only place online where you have control of the scope and longevity of your work. On your website you are free to present the heart of your work; to show who you are as an artist, educator, or activist; and to give a complete picture of your life's work—interviews you have done, articles written about you, the story behind your songs. You have the choice of publishing your work directly on your website or using your website to tell people where your work can be found. And you can keep your website online for as long as you wish.

Sarah Pirtle's website, Hope Sings[3], is an example of a personal website aimed at the future. Her songs of inspiration are "freely offered . . . for you to listen to, download, and use."

The Internet Archive

Looking further into the future, another advantage of a website is that it can be placed into an online archive, where it will be both "kept safe in a box" and available online, continuing to inform people about you and your work. Not only is it easy to see the contents of an online archive, it is straightforward to contribute to one.

> **"An online archive assures your work is both 'kept safe in a box' and available online, continuing to inform people about you and your work."**

The Internet Archive[4] began as a project to create an archive of the entire web and has since expanded into a full digital library. Its Wayback Machine[5], named after the device on *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, stores a history of nearly 550 billion web pages now or formerly available on the Internet. The Internet Archive operates "crawler" programs that search the web for new websites and encourages the public to submit their own as well. If you have ever posted something on the web, there is a chance that the Wayback Machine has a copy of it in its archive.

For fun and a bit of an "oh my!" check out CMN's home page[6] as archived by the Wayback Machine on October 17, 2000. More recent versions of *Pass It On!* and CMN's Song Library are also included in the Wayback Machine archive.

In addition to web pages, the Internet Archive collects other types of digital files. Archives of audio, video, and paper publications are common. The process is straightforward: create an account, give a name to your collection, and upload. It is free to the public (but you should donate).

Copyright

As a library, the Internet Archive makes its contents available online through copyright law's fair use doctrine. It is best for material that is either in the public domain or meant to be openly available online.

People who do not wish to have their work freely available on the Internet might consider donating a physical copy (such as a CD or hard drive) to a traditional archive instead. Donating copyrighted material to an archive does not in itself transfer any rights or ownership to the archive. Existing rights and ownerships continue to apply.

For those who wish to make their work visible online, but retain ownership of it, one option is to grant the archive a license that restricts the archive according to your wishes. Publication might be limited to the archive's website, for example, or not allowed until a future time. It is good to think through and execute such agreements at the time of the donation, to clarify and extend the rights given along with the donation.

The question of who owns and benefits from your work after you are gone is a difficult, complicated one. CMN's Legacy Affinity Group[7] is a good resource for people who wish to explore the subject further.

Archive Alive

The song you wrote and sang today is a song to sing again.

Archives can help keep your song cared for and sung.

Put yourself and your work on the Internet (in all the ways appropriate for you) and see that it gets into an online archive. People will find your music and its message there.

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1. https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/carl-foote
2. https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org
3. https://sarahpirtle.com/hope-sings
4. https://archive.org
5. https://archive.org/web
6. https://web.archive.org/web/20001017191416/http:/cmnonline.org
7. https://childrensmusic.org/event-4139074

Oh, What a Day

words and music by Judy Ariel Thomas
© 2021 Judy Ariel Thomas

Judy Ariel Thomas comes to the Children's Music Network through her work as a children's music director at Agudath Sholom Synagogue in Lynchburg, Virginia. Her compositions are simple yet sophisticated and charming. Judy tells us:

"I wrote 'Oh, What a Day!' for a New York City public school class of fourth- and fifth-grade students who were in a one-month extracurricular theater program. My synagogue's religious school children have sung it in our services. I like it because 1) it has an upbeat message (love sings on and always will), 2) kids love to sing it, 3) it's fun to play rhythm instruments along with it, and 4) it's a happy round!"

Please enjoy this delightful recording made specially by Silly Goose and Val[1]!

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1. https://www.sillygooseandval.com

Oh, What a Day

words and music by Judy Ariel Thomas
© 2021 Judy Ariel Thomas

G C/G D7/G G

Part I

Oh, what a day! Oh, what a day! What a ve - ry won - der - ful day!

Part II

Big bell, chime. Bright sun, shine on the peo - ple.

Part III

Sun goes down and bells grow still, but

G C/G D7/G G

Ev - er - y thing is hap - 'ning in a most mi - ra - cu - lous way!

Cel - e - brate this glo ri ous day!

love sings on and al - ways will! (I pro - mise you.)

G C/G D7/G G

Last Time All

Oh, what a day! Oh, what a day! What a ve - ry won - der - ful day!

G/B Am7 C/D D7 G Am7/G D7/G G

Ev - er - y thing is hap - 'ning in a most mir - ra - cu - lous way!

PART 1
Oh, what a day! Oh, what a day!
What a very wonderful day!
Everything is happening in a most miraculous way!

PART 2
Big bell, chime.
Bright sun, shine on the people.
Celebrate this glorious day!

PART 3
Sun goes down and bells grow still,
But love sings on and always will! (I promise you.)

Brown Boy Brown Girl

words and music by Kymberly Stewart
© 2020 Kymberly Stewart[1]

When we first saw Kymberly Stewart's precious video, "Brown Boy Brown Girl," we knew we needed her song for *Pass It On!* Kymberly tells us:

"I wrote 'Brown Boy Brown Girl' during the height of racial and social unrest that erupted during the 2020 pandemic. After seeing the devastating impact this had on the children of color who witnessed the madness, I felt compelled to create a song to remind them of their value, beauty, and worth. Today's children will run the world tomorrow. If we want them to create a society of respect, tolerance, and justice, we must first teach them to love and respect themselves."

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1. https://www.kymberlystewartmusic.com

Brown Boy Brown Girl

words and music by Kymberly Stewart

© 2020 Kymberly Stewart

Em/C F/G Em/C F/G Em/C F/G Em/C F/G

Brown boy, brown girl, pre-cious lit-tle black pearl, do you know you mat-ter to me?

Em/C F/G Em/C F/G Em/C B♭/G C7

Brown boy, brown girl, liv-ing in this big world, hold your head high so ev - 'ry-one can see.

1. Am/F G/E F/D Em/C F/G Gm7 C7 Am/F

Brown boy, brown girl, you have a right just to be. You're a star and you shine

G/F E Am Dm7

in the eb-on-y sky so bright. You il-lu - mi - nate! Your soul re -

Am/F Em/G 2 Am/F G/E

- so-nates. The es-sence of your pre-sence sends the ha-tred a-way. Brown boy, brown girl, I

F/D G/E Am/F G/E F/D G/E Am/F G/E

want you to know. Brown boy, brown girl, you give this world hope. Brown boy, brown girl,

F/D C Gm/B♭ C Gm/B♭ C Gm/B♭ C Gm/B♭ C

Your spir-it is gold. Brown boy, brown girl.

Brown boy, brown girl,
Precious little black pearl,
Do you know you matter to me?
Brown boy, brown girl,
Living in this big world,
Hold your head high so everyone can see.
Brown boy, brown girl,
You have a right just to be.

You're a star and you shine
In the ebony sky so bright.
You illuminate!
Your soul resonates.
The essence of your presence sends the hatred away.

Brown boy, brown girl,
Precious little black pearl,
Do you know you matter to me?
Brown boy, brown girl,
Living in this big world,
Hold your head high so everyone can see.

Brown boy, brown girl
I want you to know.
Brown boy, brown girl,
You give this world hope.
Brown boy, brown girl,
Your spirit is gold.
Brown Boy, brown girl.

Cross the Street

words and music by Sulinha Boucher
© 2020 Sulinha Boucher[1]

Sulinha's quirky, sweet, and funky video "Cross the Street" captured our hearts right away. We asked Sulinha to tell us about herself and her music and she wrote:

"Hi, I am Sulinha. I am originally from Brazil. I've been in the USA (Boston area) for over thirty-two years. I started to play music for children when I became a mom. Now my kids are all grown up and I am still loving to play for children. I also have been teaching guitar and piano full time privately. Ninety percent of my students are children, and often I get to teach them for many years. It gives me much pleasure to see that many of them will be carrying music through their lives. I am currently working on my fourth album with a great musician and producer, Eduardo Mercuri.

"I like sharing 'Cross the Street' from my third children's album, *Sulinha's Trio*. I wrote this funk, thinking of what I would like to hear if I was walking down the sidewalk. I felt it would be a fun way of sending a pedestrian safety message."

We completely agree!

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1. https://www.sulinha.com

Cross the Street

words and music by Sulinha Boucher
© 2020 Sulinha Boucher

Verse

Asus4 A7 | Asus4 A7 | Asus4 A7 | Asus4 A7 | Asus4 A7

I like go-ing out in the spring. So man-y things to see.

D9 | Db9 | C9 | Asus4 A7 | Asus4 A7

Red flowers, and white yel - low and blue.

Chorus

A7 | G7

Walk-ing down the side - walk, Walk-ing down the side - walk,

A7 | C7 | B7 | Bb7

Walk-ing down the side - walk. It's get - ing close to the point where we need to

A7

stop! Look left, look right, look left right! Cross the street. I

Verse
I like going out in the spring, so many things to see:
Red flowers, and white yellow and blue.

Chorus
Walking down the sidewalk,
Walking down the sidewalk,
Walking down the sidewalk,
It's getting close to the point where we need to stop!
Look left, look right, look left right!
Cross the street.

Chorus

I like going out in the summer, so many things to see:
Bunnies and birds, and bees and black bugs, too.

Chorus

I like going out in the fall, so many things to see:
The leaves, they are all turning red and yellow and gold.

Chorus

I like going out in the winter, so many things to see:
Snow is falling and white is all I can see.

Chorus

Social Media Tip #2

by Nikki Rung, CMN Social Media Manager

Engage!

Creating a social media profile is *not* enough to promote your business. It is critical that you engage on that platform to share your profile. Think of your profile like a single tree in an enormous woods . . . how will it stand out? Find your audience, share your posts to their page, and share *their* posts to show your engagement. Engagement is *key*!

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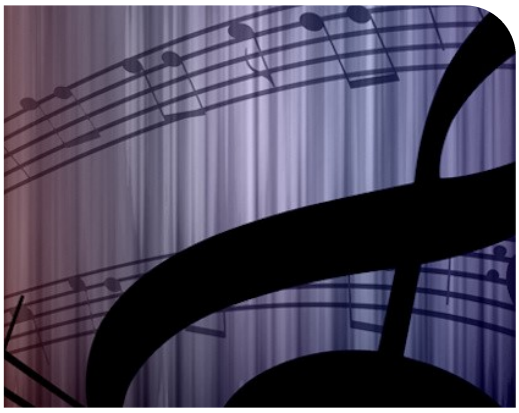
1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxTfhTLZk90

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children —serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



CMN members receive exclusive access to songs and to all issues of *Pass It On!* Join Now[1]

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How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Songs

Most of the songs published in *Pass It On!* are contributed by CMN members, and we welcome songs written by people from various parts of the continent or the world. Please share your works with us.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission[8] to *Pass It On!*

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1. https://childrensmusic.org/join
2. mailto:ginger.lazarus@gmail.com
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7. mailto:gardengoddess1@comcast.net
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